

PROCEEDINGS OF THE HISTORIC CONSERVATION BOARD

FEBRUARY 28, 2000

The Historic Conservation Board met at 3:00 PM, in the J. Martin Griesel Room, Centennial Plaza II, with eight members present: Messrs. Bloomfield, Kreider, Raser and Senhauser and Mmes. Borys, Spraul-Schmidt, Sullebarger and Wallace. Absent: Mr. Dale.

MINUTES

The minutes of the September 13, 1999 (motion by Spraul-Schmidt, second by Borys) and February 7, 2000, (motion by Spraul-Schmidt, second by Sullebarger) meetings were approved as presented.

PRELIMINARY DESIGN REVIEW--408-410 READING ROAD, RESIDENTIAL REHABILITATION, OVER-THE-RHINE (SOUTH) HISTORIC DISTRICT

Staff member Daniel Young presented the staff report and distributed drawings for the proposed renovation of a vacant warehouse as residential condominiums. Plans include the rehabilitation of the existing building and a five-story, reinforced concrete addition facing on Reading Road. Parking will be provided within the existing building.

(Mr. Raser joined the meeting.)

Mr. Young indicated that although this is a contributing building within the Over-the-Rhine National Register Historic District, the applicant is not seeking an investment tax credit at this time. He said the boarded-up windows on the east elevation will be reopened. Because this is a property line wall, the applicant plans to obtain a 15-foot "no construction" easement from the adjacent property owner.

Mr. Kevin M. Speece, AIA, representing the property owners, was available to answer questions. Mr. Speece said this is meant to be market-rate housing to be marketed in the range of \$100 to \$120/sq. ft. He explained the developer is seeking City assistance (such as gap financing) for the project.

He said that where concrete is in disrepair on the east elevation, it will be patched and repaired as necessary; the character of the concrete structure will be retained on both the exterior and interior. Bricks from the former abutting building still embedded in the existing walls will be removed. New 1" insulated window units will be installed from the inside, within the existing structural frame. Mr. Kreider said the quantity of transparency on the side of this building reminds him of the Daylight Building and that he could accept a similar window treatment.

The existing wood storefront will be retained and repaired; new steel casement windows will be installed on the street façade. Mr. Senhauser said

that although he thinks the steel casement windows were probably original to the building, he does not think they need to be duplicated or replicated.

Mr. Speece said the balcony railings have not yet been designed but will be of metal and transparent. Ms Borys commented that the concrete frame of the new addition seemed to read as a layer behind the brick veneer of the historic building. There will be a rolling grille gate on the first level leading to garages in the existing building. Mr. Speece acknowledged that there are only three garage spaces for the five-unit building and that garage access is narrow. Additional spaces will be leased from the adjacent parking lot.

Ms. Sullebarger commented and the Board agreed that the rehabilitation of this building, vacant for 40 years, with compatible new construction is very positive.

BOARD ACTION

No action by the Board is required at this time.

ADMINISTRATIVE

LAUREL HOMES, APPLICATION FOR REMOVAL OF ZONING OVERLAY

Urban Conservator William Forwood reported that a three-day design charrette was held last week with area residents, the architect and the developer of the proposed Hope 6 project. This included the development of prototype residential units, building elevations and alternative site plans.

Notices have been sent for a hearing on an application for the removal of the historic zoning overlay from the Laurel Homes site at the March 27, 2000 meeting of the Historic Conservation Board. Staff has requested that the Section 106 review be addressed concurrently; however, it does not appear that CMHA has yet submitted preliminary documentation to the Ohio Historic Preservation Office for review.

In response to questions regarding the role of the Historic Conservation Board in this process, staff members explained that the removal of the district designation will be considered as the inverse of listing the district, with the same criteria and parallel hearings. The HCB and City Planning Commission will recommend an action to City Council which will make the final decision.

It is likely that staff will recommend that the historic character and significance of Laurel Homes has not been substantially diminished since listing and that de-listing is not warranted. Although the District Guidelines may allow demolition for economic reasons, they stipulate that new construction be compatible with the existing 1930's buildings, not with the surrounding neighborhood or with housing that may have predated the present buildings. CMHA is aware that the Board may not recommend removal of the historic zoning overlay.

The application will also be heard by the City Planning Commission who may consider other planning and development issues and will look at the project in the context of a master plan for the West End. CPC could recommend removal of the overlay for other than historic reasons.

Even if City Council removes the local historic zoning overlay, the Historic Conservation Board will still have review authority under Section 106 as advisory to the Ohio Historic Preservation Office. This would include any scattered housing in the Dayton Street Historic District.

CITY DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT--600 RACE & 28-34 W. 6TH STREETS

City Planning Commission has recommended that City Council execute a lease agreement for a new Walgreen's with the developer of the properties on the northwest corner of Race and 6th Streets. This will likely involve the demolition of several contributing buildings on 6th Street. By contract, the Urban Design Review Board is the reviewing authority for any new construction at that site. The City Planning Commission has agreed that the reviewing body should include one member of the Historic Conservation Board. After much discussion, the Board unanimously elected Mr. Bloomfield (motion by Sullebarger, second by Spraul-Schmidt) as its representative to this review committee.

(Mr. Bloomfield left the meeting.)

HISTORIC CONSERVATION OFFICE 2000 WORK PLAN

Mr. Forwood presented the work plan and entertained questions from the Board. He said that the extension of the Over-the-Rhine historic district will be addressed in the pending Over-the-Rhine master plan now under way; the Historic Conservation division is ready to proceed with the extension as soon as the master plan is accepted. The only other formal designation request is for Grandin Road which will be addressed when Molly Henning returns next month.

The Board discussed becoming more proactive in seeking designation of historic districts. Mr. Forwood said there may be an opportunity to revisit some areas once proposed for designation, such as Mt. Adams, Clifton and Sayler Park, with revised guidelines and/or boundaries. Initial evaluations of East Price Hill and a Prospect Hill extension initiated in 1999 were discontinued at community request. Board members expressed concern that Historic Conservation Office does not have sufficient staff to actively pursue proposed designations.

Ms. Sullebarger commented that she and Mr. Forwood have discussed updating the 1978 City-wide inventory. It was hoped that the City and CPA could apply for funding through the Ohio Preservation Office for 2000, but other commitments made that impossible this year. The 2000 work plan

includes entering the 1978 inventory on CAGIS beginning with the City's Empowerment Zone neighborhoods.

Ms. Borys said there are a number of UC architecture and planning students who have Cincinnati Scholarships and are required to do 30 hours of community service. She suggested that some might be recruited to assist the Historic Conservation Office.

ADJOURNMENT

As there were no other items for consideration by the Board, the meeting adjourned (motion by Raser, second by Spraul-Schmidt).

William L. Forwood
Urban Conservator

John C. Senhauser
Chairman

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